



N.P.S. photograph
JOHN DUNMORE



P. H. Jauncey photograph
DAVID SELL



DEREK WHITTAKER

DRAMA OF THE FOURTH CRUSADE

THE Crusades were not always as holy as they set out to be, and the Fourth Crusade of 1202 was more tragic than most. This ill-starred adventure so far from succeeding in driving the Infidels from the Holy Land, did not even attack them, but spent its force in destroying the Christian city of Constantinople.

How this came about is the basis of *A Masque for Old Bones*, the play to be heard on the YC link on Sunday, August 11. This play was written and produced in New Zealand, and is regarded as one of the more important NZBS productions for this year. A Wellingtonian, John Dunmore, wrote the play, the music was composed by David Sell, and the production was by William Austin.

The play opens with two men remembering—The Crusader (Hal Weston) and his page (Alan Jervis), then the scene shifts backward in time to their arrival in Venice, where the Crusader is welcomed by the General (Roy Leywood). At the camp the Soldier (Derek Whittaker) trains his recruits, including the Priest (Pat Smyth) and the Scholar (Corbett Woodall). But the Expeditionary Force is short of money. The Doge of Venice, Dandolo (William Austin) presses for the payment for food and transport before the fleet can sail for Egypt. To cancel the debt he will accept the use of the assembled forces to extend Venice's dominions by attacking Zara, an Adriatic town, and then restoring to his throne the deposed Emperor of Constantinople, whose son Alexius (Terence Bayler) has come to plead his father's cause. The Cardinal (George Royle) sees this as the attempt to subvert a Christian undertaking for political purposes, and seeks to dissuade the leaders. They discredit him, and the Crusader sets off for Constantinople.

Other characters add the border patterns to the tapestry picture—the Charlatan at Zara (Peter Read), the camp Jester (John Hunter) and the daughter of the Greek Ambassador (Valerie Ambrose). Also taking part are Pauline D'Emden and Stuart James.

The idea for the play, John Dunmore told us, came from Gibbon's *History of the Crusades*.

"Gibbon gave me all the information I needed," he said, "but it's not a historical play, not a documentary, and I suppose historians could say the events

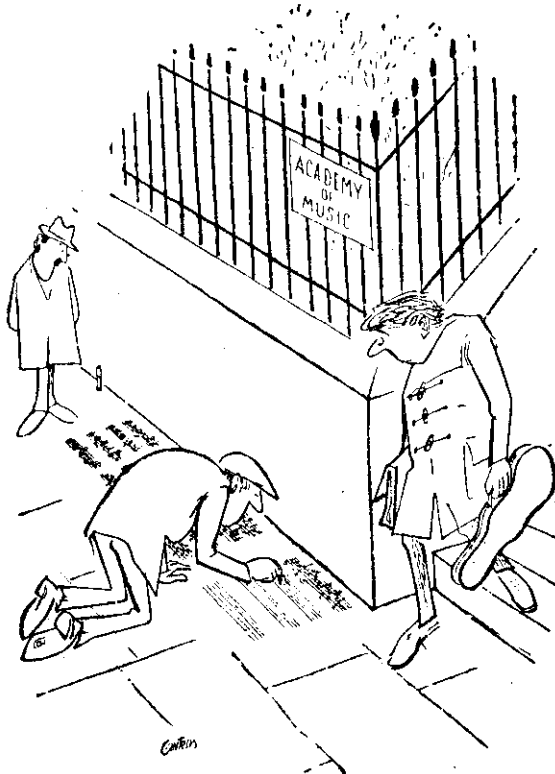
are not accurate. There is really only one historical character in the play, and I have made him fit in with my ideas. Mostly I was intrigued by this situation where a group of people got together to do one thing and then changed their minds, and by the way in which this change came about. It was as though the army which prepared in 1944 to invade Normandy had been persuaded to attack Ireland instead. I wanted to explore the typical reactions of the various ordinary people to the change. It is history in terms of the soldiers, of the people who did the actual work, which is a common enough trend today."

A Masque for Old Bones was originally written as a stage play. "After it was written," Mr Dunmore said, "I thought it might do well as a radio play, and I made some revisions and sent it to the NZBS. It has needed a few other small alterations, but it is not far from the stage version."

Although this is John Dunmore's first play, he has written literary articles for various magazines, and his interest in the theatre is of long standing.

"I was producing plays in Jersey," he told us, "and then more recently here, but I find I simply don't have the time now. And I do want to write some more."

The music for the play was written by David Sell, a music teacher at Hutt Valley Memorial Technical College. "I had to revise my knowledge of the Crusades, and of medieval music," he said, "which meant going to the Victoria College library to find examples of the music of the period. In an anthology there I came across a ballad by Richard the Lionheart, with a first line which translates 'Indeed no captive can tell his story.' The melody was ideal for my needs, and most of the music in the play is a variation on this tune. The script called for some type of early flute, and a bit of research showed that there were no flutes but recorders at this time. The music helps set the mood, and to vary it Zillah Castle has used several of her early recorders. It took us most of an afternoon to record the music with its, right pace and style. One of our pupils, Paul Taylor, added the drum music."



(C) Punch

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Banana Boat Song . . . Butterfly
. . . Cindy . . . Dambusters
March . . . Don't Forbid Me . . .
Garden of Eden . . . Gonna Get
Along . . . Just Walking in the
Rain . . . Knee Deep in the Blues
. . . Mama from the Train . . .
Mary Ann . . . Rose and Baby
Ruth . . . Round and Round
. . . See You Later Alligator . . .
Singing the Blues . . . Young Love
. . . Gone . . . Mama Look a
Booboo . . . Ninety-nine Ways . . .
Razzle Dazzle . . . Marianne . . .
Adoration Waltz . . . Teen Age
Crush . . . Too Much.

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